

Overview, Background of the master planning process

Overview: What are the goals of the master plan process?

The Asheville Downtown Master Plan is expected to be an extensive assessment of the opportunities and challenges associated with development in Asheville's near future. The plan will take current community goals into account with previous planning efforts and policies in order to provide a clear guide and predictable framework for both developers and citizens with a stake in downtown. The plan will serve as a powerful graphic tool for visualizing preferred downtown development and will be detailed enough to address downtown Asheville's immediate needs yet dynamic enough to serve as a guide for the foreseeable future.

It is anticipated that the plan will include: a written implementation strategy; a phasing plan with associated public infrastructure costs; graphic illustrations; a regulating plan; policy recommendations; and a matrix outlining the plan implementation components.

Background: How did the city decide to move forward with this process?

In 2002, Asheville's City Council adopted the Center City Plan, a document included as part of the city's Comprehensive 2025 Plan, which provided a cohesive framework for addressing housing, transportation, economics, and the physical environment in downtown. The main purpose of the document was to strengthen downtown Asheville as the social, cultural, and economic center of the region, while ensuring that the unique characteristics that attract residents and visitors were well preserved.

During the last several years, downtown Asheville has experienced significant revitalization and vibrancy, and the Center City Plan is considered to have served an important role in downtown's success. But because conditions have evolved since the Center City Plan was drafted, the Downtown Commission saw the need in 2007 for a new plan.

As downtown Asheville has grown, characteristics such as building height and design, maintaining small independent businesses, infill development and redevelopment of key areas have emerged as key issues. In April 2007, the Downtown Commission formally asked City Council to fund a Downtown Master Plan. Asheville City Council agreed with the commission's recommendation and approved funding for the plan in the city's 2008-09 budget. The overall budget for this phase of the master planning process is \$170,000.